

A record of Greater Painted-snipe *Rostratula benghalensis* in Sulawesi, Indonesia

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On the evenings of 4 and 6 August 1997 between 17h00 and 18h00, 6 Greater Painted-snipe *Rostratula benghalensis*, one adult female and five males/juveniles, were observed in a wet paddyfield approximately 200 m from the headquarters complex of Dumoga Bone National Park at Toraut, northern Sulawesi. The birds were recognised as Greater Painted-snipe, a species familiar to the observers from previous observations in Kenya, Thailand and India, by the combination of long bill, conspicuous pale eye-ring and postocular streak, prominent white stripe on the side of the breast, 'V' on the back, numerous pale spots on the flight feathers and, in the adult female, chestnut neck, face and upper breast. There are no previously documented records of Greater Painted-snipe from Sulawesi (Coates and Bishop 1997, White and Bruce, 1986), although elsewhere in Wallacea the species has been recorded from a single specimen at Mataram, Lombok (van Bemmél 1940), a female collected on West Sumbawa in January 1910 (Rensch 1931) and five breeding records from West Flores in

April, May and June (Verheijen 1964). In view of the widespread distribution of Greater Painted-snipe in Australasia and the Philippines, occurrence in Sulawesi is not surprising, although the species is presumably scarce and local.

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Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus ruber* and Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin *Cercotrichas galactotes*: two new species for China

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Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus ruber*

Two Greater Flamingos were captured in Xinjiang, China, in late 1997. The first one was obtained from local inhabitants by the staff of Hami Forestry Bureau at Erbao (42°9'N 93°1'E) in September 1997 (exact date unknown). Later in November of the same year, a group of about ten birds flew past the suburb of Urumqi. An injured bird among the group was captured and examined. Photographs of the bird while still alive are available and one specimen has been kept by the Epidemiological Institute of Xinjiang. It has also been ascertained that the birds were not imported nor escapes.

The body length and weight of one of the specimens were 930 mm and 1,700 g, respectively, both being roughly 20% less than the lowest figures given in del Hoyo *et al.* (1992). Both birds were subadults, probably first-year birds.

The nearest known breeding grounds of the Greater Flamingo are in northern Kazakhstan (Flint *et al.* 1989), some 1,500 km to the north-west of Urumqi and 2,000 km from Hami. Whether these records in Xinjiang indicate the existence of a previously unknown breeding site nearby, or occasional nomadic movements as discussed by Ali and Ripley (1987), is not clear. These records added not just a species, but also a new family to the China bird list.

Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin *Cercotrichas galactotes*

A specimen of an unfamiliar bird was collected by Mr Jia Zexin of the Xinjiang Institute of Biology, Pedology and Desert Research in May/June 1995 (exact date unknown) at Beishawo (44°15'N 87°58'E) in Fukang county, about 60 km north of Urumqi.

The specimen was examined and compared with more than thirty specimens kept by the Institute of Zoology, Kazakhstan Academy of Sciences, and positively identified as a Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin *Cercotrichas galactotes*.

This species is widely distributed in Central Asia, and its known range extends to southern Kazakhstan, adjacent to north-east Xinjiang (Flint *et al.* 1989). This record extends its range eastwards by about 1,000 km. It also adds a new genus to the China bird list.

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